

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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China, Yugoslavia

DATE DISK 5 May 1946

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1. Yugoslav interests in China until after Pearl Harbor were represented as follows.

Prior to the Russian Revolution in 1917: By the Embassy and Consulates of the Imperial Russian government.

Later, and until March 1939 (when Czechoslovakia was annexed by Germany): By Czechoslovak diplomatic representatives.

From 18 August 1939 to April 1941 (when France was occupied by the German army): By the French government.

From April to December 1941: By the Greek Consulate (in Shanghai).

After 8 December 1941: By the Association of Yugoslav Residents in China, under instructions from the Japanese authorities.

2. The Association of Yugoslav Residents in China was formed in 1937 as a cultural center of the Yugoslav community. The Executive Committee of the Association included the following:

E. P. Bechlich (Secic), chairman

B. I. Berkovich (Berkovic), vice chairman; address, apartment 148 Astor House,

17 Wangpoo Road, Shanghai (P. B. Berkovitch, 80 Funing /Broadway/ Shanghai;

M. Berkovitch, head of the shipping department of Gots Brothers and Company, 22 Nanking Road, Shanghai).

V. Boritch (Boric), first secretary; address, 220/5 Route Yailou

Captain I. Rakitch (Rakic), second secretary, address, Wanchow Road

M. Franasovich (Franasovic), treasurer; address, 221 Yulin Road.

B. Vouitch (Vujic), first controller, 1562/C-2 Avenue Joffre (related to

Mrs. N. Vouich, 1271 Rue Lafayette, manager of French Office #1 of the Concordia Chocolate and Candy Factory, office at 145 Pere Robert, Shanghai).

I. Zurak, second controller; address 394 Chuan Road.

According to E. P. Bechlich, the total membership of the Association was 130 persons, including those registered at the Italian Consulate General. (After the occupation of Yugoslavia by the German Army and the creation of the Independent Croatian State, Croats in China were represented by the Italian Embassy and Consulates).

3. Yugoslav subjects of Croatian origin totaled thirty-four, of whom twenty-three were local residents and eleven were crew members of the SS. Tomislav, Yugoslav ship which had been seized by the Italian authorities in Shanghai. These thirty-four persons were registered under the protection of the Italian Consulate General when the new state of Croatia was formed. Unemployed Croats received financial assistance from the Italian Consulate General until September 1943, when the Italian Consulate was closed; after that, the Croats approached the German Consulate

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General for protection and financial assistance. The German Consulate General requested them to form the "Croatian Committee in Shanghai", of which the following were the officials:

- M. Pavitch (Pavic), chairman; address, 92 Rue Marcel Tillet, telephone 83033.
J. Franchich (Francic), vice chairman; address, 1130 East Broadway, Shanghai
(? Y. M. Franchich, manager-proprietor-chemist of the Yugo-Slavian Pharmacy, 1130 East Broadway, Shanghai).
T. Feldvari (Feldvari), treasurer; address, 167 Broadway.
S. Krile, secretary; address, 100/3 Route Paul Henry.

The poor financial condition of Croats in Shanghai was the main reason for their coming under Italian protection. Many destitute Serbians also applied for admission to the "Croatian Committee in Shanghai" but were refused. After the capitulation of Japan, the "Croatian Committee in Shanghai" automatically ceased to function.

4. During World War II the ninety-six Yugoslav citizens in Shanghai who remained loyal to King Peter and the Yugoslav Government-in-exile in London were in critical economic condition. Six per cent had sufficient means of support; forty-four per cent were watchmen, minor employees, etc., who received very low pay; the remaining fifty per cent needed financial assistance, which E. P. Bechich attempted to obtain from Yugoslavia after the capitulation of Japan.
5. On 8 October 1944, Bechich, as chairman of the Association of Yugoslav Residents in China, sent a petition to the Yugoslav Minister in Moscow that Yugoslav nationals in China be repatriated through the USSR. On 11 June 1945 a telegram was received by Molchanov, Press Attache of the Shanghai Soviet Consulate, from the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo. The telegram stated that Yugoslav nationals could obtain from the Soviet Consulate General in Harbin or Dairen transit visas for traveling to Yugoslavia via the USSR. In May 1946 eighteen Yugoslav citizens, most of whom were members of the SS. Tomislav, left Shanghai for Yugoslavia via the USSR on board the SS. Smolny. Their passage was paid by the Yugoslav Government. The crew of the Tomislav were recalled because Yugoslavia at that time was organizing its own mercantile fleet and navy and needed specialists.
6. In June 1945 a meeting of the Association of Yugoslav Residents in China was held. During this meeting, a group of members - mostly persons of doubtful character - criticized Bechich and requested that he account for the money which he had received for the financial support of destitute members. The other group present at the meeting supported Bechich. The presence of representatives of the Shanghai Municipal Police prevented any disturbances. The opposition group proposed S. Zvetanovich (Zvetanovic) as the future chairman of the Association but the meeting was closed before anyone was elected. A few days later Bechich was assaulted by a group of Yugoslav residents headed by Varga (full name unknown). Bechich complained to the police, who questioned the group but took no action against them.
7. After August 1945 Bechich continued to represent the Yugoslav community because he had close connections with leading Soviet officials including Shanghai Soviet Consul General Khalin; V. N. Rogov, director of the Far East Department of TASS, Shanghai; and Vice Consul P. A. Sergeyev. Bechich assisted in the repatriation of Yugoslav nationals on the SS. Smolny and issued monetary subsidies to them.
8. In August 1947 an announcement appeared in the local Soviet daily papers signed by S. Zvetanovich (see paragraph 6) that the re-registration of Yugoslav citizens would take place at his house on Hua Kee Avenue, Bubbling Well Road. Only a part of the Yugoslav community appeared at this registration.

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9. Between 15 and 20 December 1947 Yugoslav citizens in Shanghai registered under the auspices of the Soviet Consulate. The form filled out included the following: full name; date and place of birth; education and profession; date of arrival in China and from what place arrived; any property owned in China; family status; desire for repatriation; if so, specify whether at personal expense or by the Yugoslav Government. Of the thirty-four persons who registered, the majority were Croats, supporters of Marshal Tito. These persons have "Special Certificates" issued by the Soviet Consulate on which is mentioned that the bearer is a Yugoslav citizen under the protection of the Soviet Consulate. All of these thirty-four are more or less pro-Soviet. They have the right to visit the Central Soviet Club as permanent guests. During World War II in Shanghai, most of these persons were members of the Yugoslav Section of the All-Slav Union. Bechich was head of this section in Shanghai (until 1945).
10. There are about twelve Serbians in Shanghai who remain loyal to King Peter and the Yugoslav Government-in-exile. These people, who are closely connected with the White Russian community in Shanghai, are anti-Communist and consider Tito a Soviet puppet. Close relations are maintained with Archbishop John through Maksimovich (Maksimovich), member of a noble Russian family which left Serbia over a hundred years ago. Maksimovich was educated in the Yugoslav Ecclesiastical Academy and speaks Serbian well. He is very popular among those Serbians in Shanghai who remain loyal to King Peter. Another leader of this group is M. A. Avdalovich (Avdalovic), former captain in the Serbian Army who took part in the Civil War in Siberia in the ranks of the White Russian Army. After the Civil War he resided in Harbin and was connected with White Russian newspapers. Later he arrived in Shanghai and at present he is a coal broker. Avdalovich is a devoted follower of the Orthodox faith and is closely connected with Archbishop John. Members of this Serbian group have Chinese Government Residents' Certificates which read "stateless of Yugoslav origin."

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